

**The
Monkes
Tale**

That though his deedly woundes soore smerte,
His mantel over his hypes castyth he
for no man sholde seen his privetee;
And as he lay of dying in a traunce,
And wiste verrailly that deed was hee,
Of honestee yet hadde he remembraunce.

Lucan, to thee this storie I recomende.
And to Swetoun, and to Valerius also,
That of this storie writen word and ende,
How that to this grete conquerours two
fortune was first freend, and sithen foe.
No man ne truste upon hire favour longe,
But have hire in awayt for evermoo;
Wittnesse on alle thise conquerours stronge.

**De Creso
Rege**

HIS riche Cresus, whilom kyng of
Lyde,
Of whiche Cresus Cyrus soore hym
dradde,
Yet was he caught amyddes al his
pryde,

And to be brent men to the fyr hym ladde;
But swich a reyn down fro the welkne shadde
That slow the fyr, and made hym to escape;
But to be war no grace yet he hadde,
Til fortune on alle the galwes made hym gape.

Whanne he escaped was, he kan nat stente
for to bigynne a newe werre agayn.
He wende wel, for that fortune hym sente
Swich hap, that he escaped thurgh the rayn,
That of his foos he myghte nat be slayn;
And eek a swevene upon a nyght he mette,
Of which he was so proud, and eek so fayn,
That in vengeance he al his herte sette.

Upon a tree he was, as that hym thoughte,
Ther Juppiter hym wessh, bothe bak and syde,
And Phebus eek a fair towaille hym broughte
To dryen hym with, and therefore wex his pryde;
And to his doghter, that stood hym bisyde,
Which that he knew in heigh science habounde,
He bad hire telle hym what it signyfyde,
And she his dream bigan right thus expounde.

The tree, quod she, the galwes is to meene;
And Juppiter bitokneth snow and reyn,
And Phebus, with his towaille so clene,
Tho been the sonne/bemes for to seyn;
Thou shalt anhangd be, fader, certeyn,
Reyn shal thee wasshe, and sonne shal thee drye.
Thus warnd she hym ful plat and ful pleyn,
His doghter, which that called was Phanye.

Anhangd was Cresus, the proude kyng;
His roial trone myghte hym nat availle.
Tragedie is noon oother maner thyng;
Ne kan in syngyng crien biwaille,
But for that fortune alwey wole assaille
With unwar strook the regnes that been proude;
for whan men trusteth hire, thanne wol she faille,
And covere hire brighte face with a cloude.

Heere stynteth the Knyght the Monk of his Tale.

The prologe of the Nonnes Preestes Tale.

IOO! quod the Knyght, good
sire, namoore of this!
That ye han seyde is right
ynough, ywis,
And muchel moore; for litel
hevynesse
Is right ynough to muche
folk, I gesse.
I seye for me, it is a greet
disce

Whereas men han been in greet welthe and ese,
To heeren of hire sodeyn fal, allas!
And the contrarie is joye and greet solas,
As whan a man hath ben in povre estaat,
And clymbeth up, and wexeth fortunat,
And there abideth in prosperitee,
Swich thyng is gladsom, as it thynketh me,
And of swich thyng were goodly for to telle.

Es, quod oure hooste, by Seint Poules belle,
Ye seyeright sooth; this Monk, he clappeth
lowde;

He spak how fortune covered with a clowde,
I noot never what, and als of a Tragedie
Right now ye herde, and, pardee! no remedie
It is for to biwaille, ne compleyne
That that is doon; and als, it is a peyne,
As ye han seyde, to heere of hevynesse.
Sire Monk, namoore of this, so God yow blesse!
Yowre tale anoyeth al this compaignye;
Swich talkyng is nat worth a boterflye;
for therinne is ther no desport ne game.
Wherefore, sire Monk, daun Piers by yowre name,
I pray yow hertely, telle us somwhat elles,
for sikerly, nere clynkyng of yowre belles
That on yowre bridel hange on every syde,
By hevne kyng, that for us alle dyde,
I sholde er this han fallen down for sleepe,
Although the slough had never been so deepe;
Thanne hadde yowre tale al be toold in veyn.
for certainly, as that this clerkes seyn,
Whereas a man may have noon audience,
Noght helpeth it to tellen his sentence;
And wel I woot the substance is in me,
If any thyng shal wel reported be.

Sir, sey somwhat of huntynge, I yow prey.

AY! quod this Monk, I have no lust to
pleye;

Now lat another telle, as I have toold.
Thanne spak oure hoost with rude speche
and boold,
And seyde unto the Nonnes Preest anon,
Com neer, thou preest, come hyder, thou sir John.
Telle us swich thyng as may oure hertes glade;
Be blithe, though thou ryde upon a jade.
What though thyn hors be bothe foule and lene,
If he wol serve thee, rekke nat a bene;
Looke that thyn herte be murie everemo.
Yis, sir, quod he, yis, hoost, so moot I go,
But I be myrie, ywis, I wol be blamed.
And right anon his tale he hath attamed,
And thus he seyde unto us everichon,
This sweete preest, this goodly man, sir John.

**Heere bigynneth the Nonnes preestes tale of
the cok and hen, chauntecleer and pertelote.**

APOVRE wydwe, som-
del stape in age,
Was whilom dwellyng
in a narwe cotage,
Beside a greve, stond-
yng in a dale.
This wydwe, of which I
telle yow my tale,
Syn thilke day that she
was last a wyf,
In pacience ladde a ful symple lyf,

for litel was hir catel and hir rente.
By housbondrie, of swich as God hire sente,
She foond hirself, and eek hire doghtren two.
Thre large sowes hadde she, and namo;
Thre keen, and eek a sheep that bighte Malle.
ful sooty was hir bour, and eek hire halle,
In which she eet ful many a skelendre meel;
Of poynaunt sauce hir neded never a deel.
No deymtee morsel passed thurgh hir throte;
hir diete was accordant to hir cote.
Repleccioun ne made hire nevere sik,
And exercise, and hertes suffisaunce.
The goute lette hire nothyng for to daunce,
Napoplexie ne shente nat hir heed;
No wyn ne drank she, neither whit ne reed;
hir bord was served moost with whit and
blak,
Milk & broun breed, in which she foond no lak,
Seynd bacoun, and somtyme an ey or tweye,
for she was, as it were, a maner deye.

YEERD she hadde, enclosed al aboute
With stikkes, and a drye dych withoute,
In which she hadde a cok, heet Chaunte-
cleer.

In al the land of crowyng nas his peer.
his voys was murier than the murie orgon
On messe/dayes that in the chirche gon;
Wel sikerer was his crowyng in his logge,
Than is a clokke, or an abbey orlogge.
By nature he knew eche ascencioun
Of the quynoxial in thilke toun;
for whan degrees fiftene were ascended,
Thanne crewe he, that it myghte nat been
amended.

his coomb was redder than the fyn coral,
And batailled, as it were a castel wal;
his byle was blak, and as the jeet it shoon;
Lyk asure were his legges, and his toon;
his nayles whiter than the lylle flour,
And lyk the burned gold was his colour.

HIS gentil cok hadde in his governaunce
Sevene hennes, for to doon al his
plesaunce,
Which were his sustres and his paramours,
And wonder lyk to hym, as of colours;
Of whiche the faireste hewed on hir throte
Was cleped faire damoysele Pertelote.

Curteys she was, discreet, and debonaire,
And compaignable, and bar hyrself so faire,
Syn thilke day that she was seven nyght oold,
That trewely she hath the herte in hoold
Of Chauntecleer loken in every lith;
He loved hire so, that wel was hym therwith.
But swiche a joye was it to here hem synge,
Whan that the brighte sonne gan to spryng,
In sweete accord, My lief is faren in londe,
for thilke tyme, as I have understonde,
Beestes and briddes koude speke and synge.

AND so bifel, that in the dawninge,
As Chauntecleer among his wyves alle
Sat on his perche, that was in the halle,
And next hym sat this faire Pertelote,
This Chauntecleer gan gromen in his throte,
As man that in his dream is drecched soore.
And whan that Pertelote thus herde hym
roore,

She was agast, and seyde, O herte deere!
What eyleth yow, to grone in this manere?
Ye been a verray sleper; fy, for shame!
And he answerde and seyde thus: Madame,
I pray yow that ye take it not agrief;
By God, me thoughte I was in swich meschief
Right now, that yet myn herte is soore aflight.
Now God, quod he, my swevene recche aright,
And kepe my body out of foul prisoun.
Me mette, how that I roomed up and down
Withinne our yeerd, whereas I saugh a beest
Was lyk an hound, and wolde han maad areest
Upon my body, and wolde han had me deed.
his colour was bitwix yellow and reed;
And tipped was his tayl, and bothe his eeris,
With blak, unlyk the remenant of his heeris;
his snowte smal, with glowyng eyen tweye.
Yet of his look for feere almoost I deye;
This caused me my gromyng, doutelees.

Hwoy! quod she, fy on yow, hertelees!
Allas! quod she, for by that God above!
Now han ye lost myn herte and al my love.
I kan nat love a coward, by my feith!
for certes, whatso any womman seith,
We alle desiren, if it myghte bee,
To han housbondes hardy, wise, and free,
And secree, and no nygard, ne no fool,
Ne hym that is agast of every tool,
Ne noon avauntour, by that God above!
How dorste ye seyn, for shame, unto your love
That any thyng myghte make yow aferd?
Have ye no mannes herte, and han a berd?
Allas! and konne ye been agast of swevenys?
Nothyng, God woot, but vanitee, in swevene is.
Swevenes engendren of replecciouns,
And ofte of fume, and of complecciouns
Whan humours been to habundant in a wight.

CERTES this dream, which ye han met
tonyght,
Cometh of the grete superfluytee